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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Guatemala

25X1A2g

DATE DISTR. 20 December 1948

SUBJECT Preparations for Military Coup d'Etat
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1. The government of Guatemala anticipated a military coup d'etat to take place on 17 December following an ultimatum delivered to Col. Francisco Arana, Chief of the Armed Forces, on 14 December by a group of young officers. The ultimatum, sent by Col. Francisco Oliva, Col. Roberto Garcia Arevalo, Major Saturnino Barrera, Lt. Col. Jorge Barrios Solares, and Major Santiago Manoz, was worded as follows: "Throw out the government or we shall do it ourselves." Arana was given until midnight 18 December to make his decision. If he decided to step aside, the others were expected to act before Christmas Day. If he decided to head the coup himself, prompt action would be demanded.
2. As a government precaution, many laborers were concentrated at the police station, and the presidential palace was closed all day. President Arevalo brought in two hundred trusted troops from other departments to replace the present palace guard. Members of the Partido Accion Revolucionaria and the Partido Renovacion Nacional patrolled the streets of Guatemala City during the period 14-17 December in private cars, anticipating trouble.
3. The first regiment of infantry, composed of four hundred men under Lt. Col. Ramiro Franco Paiz, remained loyal to Arevalo. The regiment had excellent arms, plus three tanks, as did the Guardia de Honor. The latter organization, however, which supported Arana, was superior in number.
4. The air base under command of Major Cosenza was expected to support Major Arbenz, Minister of War, and President Arevalo. If the plans of the conspirators to remove Paiz and Cosenza from their commands failed, heavy fighting was expected.

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Auth: DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

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